

***Amendments to the Claims***

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

1. (Currently amended) A sole for a shoe comprising:  
  
a midsole having at least one protrusion disposed in a forefoot region thereof, wherein said protrusion has one or more diameters; and  
  
a plate having at least one receptacle disposed therein, said receptacle having a diameter, said plate placed adjacent to said midsole such that said receptacle aligns with said protrusion, wherein ~~said one or more~~ all diameters of said protrusion are greater than the diameter of said receptacle such that only a portion of said protrusion may extend ~~through~~ into said receptacle.
2. (Original) The sole according to claim 1 further comprising an outsole fixedly attached to said plate and said midsole, wherein said outsole is disposed along the entire length of the shoe.
3. (Original) The sole according to claim 2, wherein a forefoot region of said outsole includes an exterior portion having a first hardness and an interior portion having a second hardness.
4. (Original) The sole according to claim 3, wherein said first hardness is greater than said second hardness.
5. (Original) The sole according to claim 3, wherein at least one cutout is disposed in said interior portion.

6. (Original) The sole according to claim 3, wherein at least one projection is disposed on said interior portion.

7. (Original) The sole according to claim 2, wherein at least one projection is disposed in a forefoot region of said outsole.

8. (Original) The sole according to claim 1, further comprising a sockliner having at least one nub disposed in a forefoot region on a lower surface thereof, wherein said sockliner is placed on top of said midsole with said nub facing said midsole.

9. (Original) The sole according to claim 8, wherein an abrasion-resistant material is attached to an upper surface of said sockliner.

10. (Original) The sole according to claim 9, wherein said abrasion-resistant material has absorbant properties.

11. (Original) The sole according to claim 1, further including a stiff board disposed in an arch region of said sole.

12. (Previously presented) The sole according to claim 1, wherein said plate is fixedly attached to said midsole.

13. (Previously presented) The sole according to claim 1, wherein said plate is fixedly attached to an outsole.

14. (Original) The sole according to claim 1, further comprising a cutout in said midsole, wherein said protrusion is disposed in said cutout.

15. (Original) The sole according to claim 14, wherein said protrusion is disposed in said cutout such that an outward-most extremity of said protrusion approximately aligns with an outward-most surface of said midsole.

16. (Original) An outsole for increasing circulation in a wearer's foot for use in a multi-layered sole comprising:

a generally flat portion, wherein said flat portion includes an exterior portion and a softer interior portion; and

at least one projection extending outwards from said interior portion in a forefoot region of said outsole, wherein pressure on the forefoot region from the wearer's foot causes said projection to press against a ground surface and deflect upwards into a soft upper layer of the sole, adjacent the wearer's forefoot.

17. (Original) The outsole according to claim 16, further comprising a cutout disposed in said flat portion.

18. (Currently amended) A method for increasing circulation in a wearer's forefoot comprising:

providing a sole having a first layer with at least one protrusion disposed in a forefoot region thereof, wherein said protrusion has one or more diameters and a second layer having at least one receptacle therein said receptacle having a diameter, wherein ~~said one or more~~ all diameters of said protrusion are greater than said diameter of said receptacle, wherein said second layer abuts said first layer such that said receptacle aligns with said protrusion;

applying pressure to the forefoot region of said sole, thereby forcing said protrusion and said receptacle together; and

deflecting only a portion of said protrusion into said receptacle, thereby reducing pressure in the wearer's forefoot in the immediate vicinity of said protrusion.

19. (Original) The method for increasing circulation in a wearer's forefoot according to claim 18, wherein the diameter of said receptacle is not greater than the diameter of said protrusion.

20. (Original) The method for increasing circulation in a wearer's forefoot according to claim 18, further comprising:

providing a sockliner having nubs in a forefoot region thereof extending outwards from a surface thereof; and

applying pressure to the forefoot region of said sole, thereby forcing said nubs into in the wearer's forefoot, creating massaging pressure points.

21. (Original) The method for increasing circulation in a wearer's forefoot according to claim 18, further comprising:

providing an outsole having a generally flat soft surface from which a relatively stiff projection extends; and

applying pressure to the forefoot region of said sole, thereby forcing said projection upwards, increasing the deflection of said protrusion into said receptacle.

22. (Currently amended) A sole for a shoe comprising:

a midsole having at least one protrusion disposed in a forefoot region thereof, wherein said protrusion has one or more diameters;

a plate having at least one receptacle disposed therein, said receptacle having a diameter, said plate placed adjacent to said midsole, wherein said receptacle aligns with said protrusion and wherein ~~said diameter of said receptacle is not greater than said one or more diameters of said protrusion~~ all diameters of said protrusion are greater than said diameter of said receptacle such that only a portion of said protrusion may extend ~~through~~ into said receptacle; and

an outsole, wherein said outsole is disposed on an exterior surface of said shoe sole and wherein said plate is disposed between said midsole and said outsole.

23. (Previously presented) A sole for a shoe comprising:

a midsole having at least one protrusion disposed in a forefoot region thereof, wherein said protrusion has an outward-most surface; and

a plate having at least one receptacle disposed therein, said plate placed adjacent to said midsole such that said receptacle aligns with said protrusion, wherein a diameter of said receptacle is not greater than a diameter of said outward-most surface of said protrusion such that only a portion of said outward-most surface of said protrusion may extend through said receptacle; and

an outsole fixedly attached to said plate and said midsole, wherein said outsole is disposed along the entire length of the shoe, wherein a forefoot region of said outsole includes an exterior portion having a first hardness and an interior portion having a second hardness.

24. (Previously presented) The sole according to claim 23, wherein said first hardness is greater than said second hardness.

25. (Previously presented) The sole according to claim 23, wherein at least one cutout is disposed in said interior portion.

26. (Previously presented) The sole according to claim 23, wherein at least one projection is disposed on said interior portion.

27. (Previously presented) A method for increasing circulation in a wearer's forefoot comprising:

providing a sole having a first layer with at least one protrusion disposed in a forefoot region thereof, wherein said protrusion has an outward-most surface and a second layer having at least one receptacle therein, wherein said second layer abuts said first layer such that said receptacle aligns with said protrusion;

applying pressure to the forefoot region of said sole, thereby forcing said outward-most surface of said protrusion and said receptacle together;

deflecting only a portion of said outward-most surface of said protrusion into said receptacle, thereby reducing pressure in the wearer's forefoot in the immediate vicinity of said protrusion;

providing an outsole having a generally flat soft surface from which a relatively stiff projection extends; and

applying pressure to the forefoot region of said sole, thereby forcing said projection upwards, increasing the deflection of said protrusion into said receptacle.